

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6 and 8-11 were reported in the Office Action as pending. Claims 1, 4-6 and 10 are rejected. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 2 - 4 and 7 are cancelled. Claim 8 is allowed. Claims 9 and 11 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 5-6, and 8-11 remain.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of pending claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

It is noted in the Office Action that Claims 1 and 4-6 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nikon in view of Arai, Toshiya, and further in view of Belly et al. (20030214058). Claim 10 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nikon, Arai, Toshiya and Belly as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of Tsujino et al. (US 5362428), the Examiner further noting Claim 1 is objected to because the claim should end with a period instead of a comma.

Firstly, in response to the Examiner's request that Claim 1 should end with a period instead of a comma, Applicant has amended Claim 1 as requested by the Examiner.

Second, in response to the above rejections under 35 USC 103(a), Applicant has amended Claim 1 by adding the features of Claim 4, but further adding "until the optical lens is locked by said locking portion." This feature is supported by the description of the invention at page 30, lines 6-15. Claim 4 has been cancelled.

Applicant notes the distinctions between the present invention and the cited references are as follows:

(1) Nikon (JP 9-290340) teaches none of the loading table, dripping device and moving device as claimed.

Also, the centering device taught in Nikon differs from the centering device of the present invention in that the means used in the centering device of the present invention for

pressing the optical lens is different in structure from the corresponding means used in Nikon on at least two grounds (A and B as described below).

Difference A: The Nikon lever member 51 is formed in the shape of sheet or plate so as to be positioned almost flush on the top thereof with the lens 35. This lever member 51 is used solely for simply pressing the peripheral surface of the lens 35 by a leverage action. That is to say, the Nikon centering device is not provided with the pins which press against the peripheral surface of the optical lens 35. For this reason, it is not possible for this centering device of Nikon to control the moving direction of the optical lens 35 when the lens 35 moves upward with respect to the base member 31.

Further, this centering device lacking such pins as those provided in the present invention cannot provide other functions to be provided by the pins according to the present invention. The other functions herein referred to include positioning the optical lens to a block position as a result that the locking portions of the pins act to lock the upper peripheral edge of the optical lens. The pins 31 used in the present invention not only press against the optical lens when it is centered, but guides the lens when it is moved upward, in addition to functioning as a stopper when it is positioned to the block position. Thus, the centering device according to the present invention giving the pins 31 the foregoing three functions allows a reduction in size.

Difference B: The lever member 51 of Nikon swings when pushed by the roller 37. The roller 37 is held in contact with the side surface of the lever member. The clamp member 30 of the present invention having the oblong hole 43 formed longitudinally therein swings as the moving shaft 44 inserted in this oblong hole 43 moves therealong. In other words, the structure for driving the Nikon lever member 52, which necessitates that each lever member 51 be disposed in parallel with each associated roller 37, inevitably is larger as compared with the corresponding structure based on the present invention.

(2) Arai (US 6,918,822) teaches none of the dripping device, moving device and centering device.

In rejecting Claim 4, the limitations of which have been added to Claim 1, the Examiner contends that Arai discloses a loading table swingably supported by support means and a moving device capable of moving a table into a block position referencing FIG. 13 and the associated text. In this connection, what appears to be a loading table on which an optical lens is to be placed with a concave surface thereof facing up is element 145 as shown in FIG. 13. Although element 145 is not specifically described, there does not appear to be any structure which would enable element 145 to be swingably supported by support means as claimed. This mechanism is described in the present application with reference to FIG. 4, and at page 16, lines 10-19.

In this connection, it is noted that in Arai et al., the lens 1 is placed on loading table 145 such that the convex surface is facing up. Thus, it is possible that the Examiner construes holder fixing mechanism 83, or lens holder 2 as the loading table. In this connection, it is noted that Arai discloses that this structure can be pivoted in the direction of arrow 87. However, the purpose of allowing lens holder 2 to pivot in this manner is to allow lens holder 2 to be fitted into the main body 82 easily as described in Arai at column 10, lines 57-59. However, this ability to enable Arai's lens holder 2 to be easily fitted in the main body is completely unrelated to the swingably supported loading table of the present invention which, as described at page 16, lines 10-19 is so that the loading table can cope with various types of lens blanks.

(3) Toshiya (JP 2003-71691) relied upon to support a rejection of Claims 5 and 6 discloses neither the centering device taught in the present invention as claimed by Applicant, nor the moving device for moving upward the loading table, nor the swingably supported loading table.

Furthermore, since the apparatus taught in Toshiya is not provided with a centering device, no optical lens could be held thereby with a high accuracy.

(4) Belly (US2003/0214058) relied upon to support a rejection of Claims 1 and 10 discloses none of the swingably supported loading table, centering device, dripping device and moving device as claimed by Applicant.

(5) Tsujino et al., relied upon to support the rejection of Claim 10, also does not disclose the centering device taught in the present invention as claimed by Applicant, nor the moving device for moving upward a swingably supported loading table.

In addition, the pegs 31a, 31b, and 31c taught in Belly are not intended to support the peripheral surface of an optical lens movably upward.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 103(a) is respectively requested.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims pending following entry of this amendment, namely Claims 1, 5-6 and 8-11, are now in condition for allowance, which early action is requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would be useful in moving the case forward, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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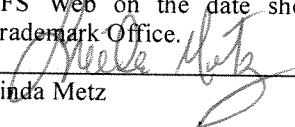
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